



Improving english language proficiency of grade 10 students through input hypothesis

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Abstract

Learning a foreign language denotes learning how to read, listen, speak, and write in that dialect. The ability to read, speak and write well is not a naturally acquired skill; it is usually learned, thus, it must be practiced and learned through experience. This quasi-experimental study aimed at investigating the effectiveness of Input Hypothesis or Pre-reading, During Reading, and Post Reading Strategy to improve the English language proficiency, particularly reading, speaking, and writing skills of the Grade 10 students during the school year 2019-2020. Specifically, this study determined the level of English language proficiency of the students in the control and experimental groups during the pretest and posttest in terms reading, speaking, and writing. Data were analyzed and interpreted through descriptive statistics such as frequency and percentage, mean, and T-test. The Pearson Correlation was employed in determining the significant difference in reading, speaking, and writing of the students in the pretest and posttest.

In terms of the pre reading, during reading, and post reading used as an intervention or strategy, the result showed that it was effective with an excellent descriptive rating. The findings further suggested that teachers should intervene and engage the students into reading, speaking, and writing activities to ensure students' high performance. Likewise, language literacy projects should be implemented to continuously assess the performance of the students in achieving English competencies.

This study concludes that the English language proficiency among students could be enhanced with the support of instructional strategies that would address their strengths, weaknesses, needs, and concern.

Keywords: Input hypothesis, Pre-reading, during reading, Post-reading, speaking, writing

Introduction

Different studies reveal that the quality of education in the Philippines is continuously deteriorating. This impression is based on the results of achievement tests and board examinations. The Professional Regulatory Commission (PRC) reports that passers of board examination in all fields of endeavor continue to go down. One of the significant causes for this phenomenon is the low academic performance in the elementary and secondary levels. This academic performance of the students can be recognized to their proficiency in the English language.

Educators agree that proficiency in English language is the foundation for success in academic pursuits. Reading, speaking, and writing are tasks that is based on language abilities. Definitely language proficiency is a key to academic performance.

Sookchotirat (2005) suggested that reading skill is the most important skill as it is the basis of all the success in one's life. Good readers can gain more knowledge of any kind from reading. Reading makes the reader more knowledgeable, have wider perspectives and vision. Reading helps the reader get new ideas leading to cognitive development. When the readers transfer what they read to apply with their own idea a new perspective or idea is created.

However, there have been problems in English teaching in the education in the Philippines, including elementary and secondary. Some of the graduates of each educational level do not have reading ability to comprehend. Generally, it can be claimed that the problem was caused by the inadequacy of teaching and learning time. Teaching reading is a continuing process; it should be given continuously from the first to the highest educational level. Teaching reading to

learners at very young age is, therefore, the basis for the higher level (Noysangsri, 2001) ^[11].

The study of Tongco (2011) ^[15] recognized the reading proficiency level of the Grade IV, V, and VI students of Bitano ES in the following reading comprehension skills: literal, inferential, critical, creativeness and valuing and devised appropriate school reading packages based from the findings. The result of the verbal reading test in word recognition and comprehension was analyzed with the use of PHIL-IRI reading criteria. The findings revealed that almost all students fall under frustration level.

On the other hand, speaking represents one of the essential requirements of today's society. Moreover, other skills and knowledge, it is reflected as one of the most persuading factors while applying for a job or supporting in a certain work position under the condition of progressing the language level.

The study, piloted by HA Cervantes Knowledge Systems, Inc., the Philippine -based firm which administers the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) took sample measurements of graduating learners for Year 2001-2002 from selected educational institutions from Metro Manila. It reveals how the English proficiency of the examinees stands against the international benchmark, especially among business trade community.

Consequently, writing, in general means a "form of human communication by means of a set of visible marks that are related, by convention, to some particular structural level of language" (Writing, 2012, pp. 129). In addition, writing also refers to the activity by which a piece of written language has been produced.

Moreover, writing reinforces the grammatical structures, idioms, and vocabulary taught to students. Second, when

learners compose, they also have a chance to be exploratory with the language, to go further than what they have just learned to say, to yield risks. Third, when they write, they essentially become involved with the new language; the determination to express ideas and the continual use of eyes, hand and brain is a unique way to strengthen learning. As students struggle with what to put down afterward or how to situate it down on paper, they often learn something new to write.

The study of Lopez (2023) ^[9] revealed that mathematics competency is impacted by the respondents’ English proficiency. K-12 graduates with higher English proficiency produce higher mathematics competency and vice versa. Thus, English proficiency is a good predictor of mathematics competency among K-12 students.

English teachers of a certain schools in Cagayan de Oro City have observed one of the schools in this city that most of the students especially the grade ten levels failed to achieve and master some of the learning competencies which are connected and related to reading, speaking, and writing skills in the K-12 English curriculum guide provided by the Department of Education. Teachers, like the researcher are faced with challenge of addressing students’ lack of reading, speaking, and writing abilities which emanate from their confusion and difficulty in understanding English language.

Additionally, the main purpose of this study was to enhance the reading, speaking, and writing ability of the students through exposing them to “Input Hypothesis in the form of Pre-During-Post Reading Strategy” intervention.

The Input Hypothesis is a comprehensible process in which students will undergo different techniques in enhancing their reading, speaking, and writing skills. The program included high interest activities that are slightly moderate to above the students’ reading level to stimulate interest and enjoyment of reading and provide individualized and differentiated instruction. In this particular study, three phases of the reading strategy were implemented. The Pre-reading, During Reading and Post Reading Strategy.

Methodology

This research used the quasi-experimental design. This design is chosen by the researcher to prove the effectiveness of an intervention in improving the English language proficiency of the students. In this particular study, the researcher conducted intervention using Input Hypothesis in the form of Pre-During-Post-Reading strategy in improving the English proficiency, specifically reading, speaking, and writing skills of the students.

This study was conducted in one of the public high schools in Cagayan de Oro City during this academic year 2019-2020. Purposive sampling design was used in choosing the two sections out of three sections. The respondents of the study were the grade 10 students, who were officially enrolled for this academic year. There were only 3 sections for the grade 10 level in this school, each section was composed of 35 students. Among the 3 sections, only two

sections were used in the study. To get the experimental and control groups, the researcher made folded papers to pick by each advisers. The adviser who got the blank folded paper means that her section was not including in the study. As a result, Section Jupiter was the experimental group which underwent the intervention; while section Saturn was the control group in this study. This grade level is purposely chosen by the researcher to test the effectiveness of the Input Hypothesis through pre-during-post-reading strategy in improving the English proficiency of the students, particularly in reading, speaking, and writing skills effectively. The reading, speaking, and writing skills were purposely chosen by the researcher because it is observed by most English teachers that students really find difficulty in expressing their ideas using the English language as well as writing essays, compositions and research papers. The researcher aimed to improve their reading, speaking, and writing skills of the students.

The instrument for the pre-test and post-test was adapted from Vietnam National University English Proficiency Test 2013 of Dr. Nguyen Quoc Chinh. For the intervention, the experimental group underwent varied activities for the pre-during-post reading. The paper of the students was checked by the teacher-researcher and was returned to the students. Discussion of answers followed. There were 9 reading selections used for pre-during-post reading which involved varied activities to improve the reading, speaking and writing skills of the students. The intervention was administered for ten (9) consecutive weeks. Then, the post-test activity was conducted.

The analysis of data involved descriptive method. Mean was used to determine the English Proficiency level of the students between the control and experimental groups during pretest and post-test. T-test was used to establish the significant difference between the Pre-Test and Post-Test of the control and experimental groups.

Results and discussion

This section presents the data with its corresponding analysis, interpretation, and implications.

English Language Proficiency Level

In this particular study, the three skills of English language proficiency that are considered are reading, speaking, and writing.

Table 1 shows the English language proficiency in terms of reading in pre-test and post-test. It is revealed that during the pre-test, the control group got a mean of 77.34 (SD=0.89) with a qualitative description of average. This implied that the students have not fully mastered reading which resulted to low vocabulary and comprehension. It showed that the students need to practice reading as a habit in order to increase their reading skills. This indicated also that they got problems in analyzing inferences and recognizing structure because they lack understanding in comprehending the text.

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents on English Proficiency in Terms of Reading in Pre-Test and Post-Test

Group	Reading Proficiency Level					
	Pre-test			Post-test		
	Mean	SD	Qualitative Description	Mean	SD	Qualitative Description
Control	77.34	0.89	Average	83.16	0.43	Above Average
Experimental	77.13	0.56	Average	90.26	0.61	Excellent

The result disclosed that there was an increase of their vocabulary and comprehension skills which is evidently shown in the result of their post-test. It also revealed that they are good at identifying main ideas, supporting details and specific information, and few problems in understanding inferences because of the reading activities that the teacher employed. According to Vacca (2001), the teacher has a responsibility to plan the instructions which make the students experience the satisfaction of learning from the text.

On the other hand, during the pre-test of the experimental group, they got a mean of 77.13 (SD=0.56) with a qualitative description of average. This suggested that the students have not fully mastered the reading skills which results to low vocabulary and comprehension. The students need to practice reading as a habit in order to increase their reading skills. They got problems in analyzing inferences and recognizing structure because of lack of reading practices to master the skill which resulted to low academic performance and even in life success. According to Anderson (2008), reading is a basic life skill and the lack of reading comprehension affects student’s academic growth. Reading is the corner stone of a child’s success in school and consequently through life. Without the ability to read effectively, opportunities for personal fulfillment and job success inevitably will be lost.

Moreover, during the post-test, the experimental group got a mean of 90.26 (SD=0.61) with a qualitative description of

excellent. This implied that proper reading activities and strategies help in developing the reading skills of the students. There was an increase of their vocabulary and comprehension skills which is evidently shown in the result of their post-test. They were very good at identifying main ideas, supporting details and specific information, and almost no problems in understanding inferences because of the reading strategies and activities that was employed by teacher. According to David (2000) reading skills is the foundation of all content area, it is vital that the diversity of needs relating to reading skills be met. It must be assumed that it is not the fact that we give the students the chance to read, but that we instruct them on how to understand, how to comprehend and how to use strategies that will help them comprehend what they are reading, as they read for any specific content area.

Table 2 shows the English language proficiency in terms of speaking in pre-test and post-test. It was revealed that during the pre-test, the control group got a mean of 73.78 (SD=0.63) with a qualitative description of average. This implied that the students have not fully mastered speaking skills which results to lack of verbal communication. More practices on speaking among students are necessary and becoming a habit in order to improve their speaking ability. Further, they got problems in communicating other people and got errors of phonology, grammar and lexis because of inability to use the language in everyday communication.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents on English Proficiency in Terms of Speaking in Pre-Test and Post-Test

Group	Speaking Proficiency Level					
	Pre-test			Post-test		
	Mean	SD	Qualitative Description	Mean	SD	Qualitative Description
Control	73.78	0.63	Average	81.26	0.31	Above Average
Experimental	78.23	0.78	Average	84.25	0.49	Above Average

According to Richards and Renandya (2002) ^[12], the effective oral communication entails the ability to use the language properly in social interactions that contains not only verbal communication but also paralinguistic elements of speech such as pitch, stress, and intonation.

Moreover, during the post-test, the control group got a mean of 81.26 (SD=0.31) with a qualitative description of above average. This indicated that the students had a satisfactory verbal communication. It disclosed that the students had limited number of errors of grammar, lexis or pronunciation because of the speaking interactions that the student’s experience during their classroom instructions. According to Miller (2003) ^[10] the teacher is accountable to design the instructions in the classroom which lead to mastery of a certain skills of the students.

On the other hand, during the pre-test of the experimental group, they got a mean of 78.23 (SD=0.78) with a qualitative description of average. This entailed that the students have not fully mastered the speaking skills which results to very limited understanding of the language. The students need to constantly engage the target language through interaction. Likewise, they got many errors of phonology, grammar and lexis because they lack vocabulary knowledge and grammar on the usage of words in expressing their self. According to Min-yan (2007), vocabulary knowledge and grammar are two essential factors of foreign language learning and they both influence the learners’ speaking performance. Vocabulary knowledge

and grammar helps learners to build comprehensible sentences in speaking.

Moreover, during the post-test, the experimental group got a mean of 84.25 (SD=0.49) with a qualitative description of above average. This revealed that proper speaking activities and strategies help in developing the speaking skills of the students. There was an increase in their speaking performance after using the intervention. Likewise, they were very good at verbal communication with limited number of errors of grammar, lexis or pronunciation and little difficulty in understanding because of its process or technique that were given to them which involves appropriate activities that will develop their speaking skills. According to Scott (2005), improving the speaking skills of the students may be difficult, but the added benefit is building confidence in students for speaking skills and appropriate strategies used in a foreign or second language will definitely improve the speaking ability of the students.

Table 3 shows the English language proficiency in terms of writing in pre-test and post-test. During the pre-test, the control group got a mean of 76.20 (SD=0.47) with a qualitative description of average. This implied that the students have not fully mastered the writing skills which results to low structures, vocabulary, and grammar usage. The students need to master the process of writing in order to increase their writing abilities. It was also revealed that they got problems in paragraph level cohesion which leads to inaccuracies.

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents on English Proficiency in Terms of Writing in Pre-Test and Post-Test

Group	Writing Proficiency Level					
	Pre-test			Post-test		
	Mean	SD	Qualitative Description	Mean	SD	Qualitative Description
Control	76.20	0.47	Average	81.12	0.68	Above Average
Experimental	74.28	0.23	Average	85.23	0.72	Above Average

According to Brown (2001) [2] that writing is a process which contains of thinking (collecting ideas), drafting (writing), and revising (redrafting) that need specialized skills. Writing does not only require some stages but it also has special agreements related to grammar, vocabulary, letter, words, and text-formation that are demonstrated by script, spelling, layout and punctuation (Harmer, 2007) [6].

Moreover, during the post-test, the control group got a mean of 81.12 (SD=0.68) with a qualitative description of above average. This suggested that practicing the skills of writing helps in developing the students' performance in writing. It was disclosed that there was an increase of their writing ability which is evidently shown in the result of their post-test. Further, they have many content points elaborated with good sentence and paragraph level cohesion and sentence because of the learning engagement with their writing that they encounter during classroom instruction. Richards and Renandya (2002) [12] stated that teacher also should involves what content will actively encourage students to use writing as a tool for learning and for communication and to become engaged enough with their writing to have an investment in examining it, improving it, and revising it for readers.

On the other hand, during the pre-test, the experimental group got a mean of 74.28 (SD=0.23) with a qualitative description of average. This exposed that the students have not fully mastered the writing skills which results to low structures, vocabulary, and grammar usage. It showed that the students need to master the process of writing as well as teachers need to reflect their activities if it fits to their learners to ensure the increase of their writing abilities, and they got problems in paragraph level cohesion which leads to inaccuracies because they lack knowledge and engagement of activities of the writing skills. According to James (2012), the teacher should reflect upon her/his practices during the teaching learning process. She or he has to consider why one class or activity works and another does not. Over this reflective teaching, the teacher can plan a new strategy in teaching, with the faith that it will be better.

Moreover, during the post-test, the experimental group got a mean of 85.23 (SD=0.72) with a qualitative description of

above average. This divulged that proper writing activities and strategies help in developing the writing skills of the students. It revealed that they have many content points elaborated with good sentence and paragraph level cohesion. There was a good range of structures and vocabulary and occasional inaccuracies that do not disrupt communication because through the different writing activities students are engage frequently with the process of writing which means they are able to exercise the skills that they need with proper strategy through the help of the teacher. Kimble and Garmezy (2000) asserted that learning is a relatively permanent change in behavioral inclination and learning is the result of reinforced practice. It means that in teaching writing, the teacher has to demonstrate and support students to learn how to write, give instructions, guide students in writing, offer students with knowledge of writing, and make students to understanding how to write efficiently.

Difference between the Pre-Test and Post-Test Results

Table 4 shows the Inferential Statistics between the Pre-Test and Post-Test of the Control Group in terms of Reading, Speaking and Writing. As reflected in table 4, the control group in the pre-test had an F value (12.21) for reading with a probability value (0.001); in the post-test, the control group had an F value (13.39) with a probability value (0.001) which means a significant difference of their pre-test and post-test scores. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected. In terms of speaking, the result showed that the control group in the pre-test has an F value (13.01) for reading with a probability value (0.000), and in the post-test, the control group had an F value (14.27) with a probability value (0.001) which means a significant difference of their pre-test and post-test scores. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected. Furthermore, result revealed in the pre-test that the control group had an F value (12.69) for writing with a probability value (0.001), and in the post-test, the control group had an F value (14.03) with a probability value (0.001) which means a significant difference of their pre-test and post-test scores. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Table 4: Inferential Statistics between the Pre-Test and Post-Test of the Control Group

Control Group	Pre-Test				Post-Test			
	F	P	Interpre-tation	Decisi-on	F	P	Interpre-tation	Decision
Reading	12.21	0.001	Signifi-cant	Reject	13.39	0.001	Significant	Reject
Speaking	13.01	0.000	Signifi-cant	Reject	14.27	0.001	Significant	Reject
Writing	12.69	0.001	Signifi-cant	Reject	14.03	0.001	Significant	Reject

Legend: F - Analysis of Variance P – Probability Value

As shown in Table 4, there was an increase in the scores of control group in the pre-test and post-test. It implied that the students were already exposed to various activities that will propel their skills in the said areas. However, the result could not give an assurance that the students in the control group will have a high level of improvement in reading,

speaking, and writing skills since the results got only a little increase of their test scores.

Burquillo (2010) suggested that the reading strategy with the use of friendly competition provides a strong motivation for students, helping to increase their performance. He further inferred that the majority of the students in the

control group are mostly in the average level of their skills. Table 5 shows the Inferential Statistics between the Pre-Test

and Post-Test of the Experimental Group in terms of Reading, Speaking and Writing.

Table 5: Inferential Statistics between the Pre-Test and Post-Test of the Experimental Group

Experi-Mental Group	Pre-test				Post-test			
	F	P	Interpre-tation	Decisi-on	F	P	Interpre-tation	Decision
Reading	12.71	0.000	Signifi-cant	Reject	15.21	0.000	Significant	Reject
Speaking	12.69	0.000	Signifi-cant	Reject	16.11	0.001	Significant	Reject
Writing	12.33	0.001	Signifi-cant	Reject	15.63	0.000	Significant	Reject

Legend: F - Analysis of Variance P – Probability Value

The result in Table 5 indicated that the experimental group in the pre-test had an F value (12.71) for reading with a probability value (0.000); in the post-test, the control group had an F value (15.21) with a probability value (0.000) which means a significant difference of their pre-test and post-test scores. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected. In terms of speaking, the result showed that the control group in the pre-test had an F value (12.69) for reading with a probability value (0.000), and in the post-test the control group had an F value (16.11) with a probability value (0.001) which means a significant difference of their pre-test and post-test scores. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected. Furthermore, result exposed that in the pre-test, the control group had an F value (12.33) for writing with a probability value (0.001); on the other hand, in the post-test, the control group had an F value (15.63) with a probability value (0.000) which means a significant difference of their pre-test and post-test scores. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected. As shown in the table 5, there was a high increase in the scores of experimental group in the pre-test and post-test. It disclosed that the Input Hypothesis as an intervention which was applied to the experimental group was really effective in improving the student’s reading, speaking, and writing skills.

Although teaching reading methods might be a hardship for instructors who are not appropriately supported by teacher education programs (Fathi & Behzadpour, 2011^[4]; Khatib & Fathi, 2014)^[8], Ghaith (2017)^[5] urged that teachers do so in order to foster reading performance of their pupils. Furthermore, it is important to remember that effective teaching tactics to EFL teachers themselves need training (Zhang & Wu, 2009). As a result, pre-service EFL instructors must be prepared by teacher education programs to implement reading strategies in their own classrooms (Fathi & Afzali, 2020)^[3].

Difference in the Post-test between Control and Experimental Groups

Table 6 shows the Inferential Statistics on the Post-Test between Control and Experimental Groups. In terms of reading, the control group got an F value (13.39) with a probability value (0.001); on the other hand, the experimental group got an F value (15.21) with a probability value (0.000) which means a significant difference of their post-test scores. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Table 6: Inferential Statistics on the Post-Test between Control and Experimental Groups

Group	Post-test											
	Reading				Speaking				Writing			
	F	P	Interpretation	Decision	F	P	Interpre-tation	Deci-sion	F	P	Interpre-tation	Deci-sion
Control	13.39	0.001	Significant	Reject	14.27	0.001	Significant	Reject	14.03	0.001	Significant	Reject
Experimental	15.21	0.000	Significant	Reject	16.11	0.001	Significant	Reject	15.63	0.000	Significant	Reject

Furthermore, in terms of speaking, the control group got an F value (14.27) with a probability value (0.001); on the other hand, the experimental group got an F value (16.11) with a probability value (0.001), which means a significant difference of their post-test scores. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Moreover, in terms of writing, the control group got an F value (14.03) with a probability value (0.001); however, the experimental group got an F value (15.63) with a probability value (0.000), which means a significant difference of their post-test scores. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected.

In the study conducted by Togonon (2017) on the development and evaluation of Reading Strategies as Strategic Intervention Materials as a valid instructional material in teaching high school English, the results showed a significant difference between the achievement of the students before and after being exposed to RS-SIMs.

As shown in Table 6, there was an increase in the scores of both groups in the posttest as compared in their pretest scores. It implied that the students’ achievement in the control group is significantly different from the students’

achievement in the experimental group. This further indicated that the students exposed to traditional approach have achievement that is significantly different from the students exposed to the intervention.

Conclusions

This study concludes that the English language proficiency of the students can be enhanced with the support of intervention or instructional strategies that would address their strengths, weaknesses, needs, and concern. Moreover, teachers play a significant role in improving the skills of the students related to English language Proficiency. Yet, it cannot be denied that there are problems faced by the respondents since the English language is a foreign language to them; however, there are still methods and procedure provided by the teachers to overcome those difficulties. Parallel to this, it is imperative that teachers should design activities that will suit to the students’ needs and interest since students learn in a different way. Thus, activities should be given attention in the teaching and learning process.

Furthermore, although it can be deduced from the findings that the strategies and techniques were deemed to be helpful to the students in developing the areas of the English language proficiency, still, it cannot be denied that after the intervention, these learnings might be gone or forgotten if reinforcements and follow-up activities will not be given.

Statements and declarations

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- b. Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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